

**Abstract 548**

**TITLE:** Statewide Collaboration of HIV /STD Prevention Education

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**ISSUE:** The Connecticut State Department of Education has set a 5year goal to establish, strengthen and expand HIV/STD prevention education within comprehensive school health education. To successfully accomplish this task, collaboration with otherstate and community based organizations is vital in creating a comprehensive holistic approach to HIV/STD prevention education.

**SETTING:** A collaboration of stale and communitybased organizations providing statewide training and resources for school pesonnel.

**PROJECT:** Under the direction of the State Department of Education (SDE) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) an HIV/STD task force was formed to develop a comprehensive plan the to ensure systematic implementation of quality HIV/STD preventin education. Members of the task force were carefully chosen to ensure a balanced/diverse representation of health professionals, parents, clergy, and educators. The task force was charged with addressing the following objectives: assess the availabilityand adequacy of HIV/STD education, develop a systemic plan to provide technical assistance and training to school districts, create strategies to impact students at highest risk for HIV and gather samples that support the delivery of HIV/STD prevention education. This collective approach enables the task force to identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs which in turn helps to avoid duplication of services and identifies implementation gaps.

**RESULTS:** Even though school districts are required to offer HIV/AIDS education, the task force found that the content and delivery varies greatly across the state. Teacher training in HIV/STD prevention was lacking and many districts expressed an interest/need for sample HIV policies. The task force was instrumental in developing a training plan targeting school personnel including K-12 teachers, nurses, and administrators and support services. To date, over 250 school personnel have been trained and supplemental resources offered to the districts innde consultation services and a statewide newsletter for teachers. The task force is currently working on plans to address "highest risk" and policy issues.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** Collaboration among a diverse task force has allowed for an exchange of vital expertise in creating an informational, motivational and behavioral skillsbased approach to HIV/STD prevention education in Connecticut schools.

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